

- Ready Nutrition - <http://readynutrition.com> -

Are You Ready Series: Best Practices For Long Term Food Storage

Posted By [Tess Pennington](#)

On April 3, 2011 @ 1:00 am

Category: Are You Ready, Reserve Supplies, Storage, Survival Food

ReadyNutrition.com



^[1] Archaic food caches have been found all over the world. The fact that our ancestors planned for the unexpected gives us a clear picture into their unpredictable lifestyle. Foods such as nuts, extra tools and foraging tools were put away for a time when they were needed the most ([Source](#) ^[2]). Of course, the lifetimes of these preps were contingent upon proper storage methods.

These days, we know much more about proper techniques for food packaging. With the proper storage tools a person can store many different types of foods indefinitely. Learning how to store food is cost effective, simple to understand and is a life saver if an emergency arises.

Many preppers like to choose a multi-barrier system to store their food. This barrier system is for long term purposes, and will keep natural elements such as sunlight, moisture and air out of the container when sealed.

Storing Food in Containers

Any food that you plan to store indefinitely, should be stored in food grade containers. These containers will not transfer any non-food chemicals into the food, nor are there any chemicals within the container that are hazardous to humans. Typically a food grade container has a #2 by the recycle symbol or the acronym "HDPE" stamp on the bottom (HDPE stands for "high density polyethylene"). Before any food is to be stored, clean the containers with soapy water, rinse and dry thoroughly. 5 gallon plastic containers are the most popular amongst those who store bulk quantities of food.

Additionally, make sure that the lid you purchase for your container is air tight and spill proof. Lids with gaskets and gamma lids are great lids as they do not require a lid opener. They are typically a little more expensive compared to the traditional bucket lid. However, they are easier to open and close, and are worth every penny!

Food Liner

Research has shown that over time, slow amounts of oxygen seep through the walls of plastic containers. Consequently, over time natural elements, and even insects can find a way inside the container. To add additional protection, adding a food liner, such as Mylar bags will ensure that there are multiple barriers for the food to be protected in. Investing in the thickest grade of Mylar would be a good investment for your food storage endeavors. Simply because if properly cared for, mylar bags can last up to 20 years! Additionally, the thicker grade Mylar makes a big difference in the taste of food. The greatest part of investing in these food liners is that because they are so durable they can be reused over and over again.

For those who are investing in a shorter term food supply, many simply pour the food contents into mylar bags, add an oxygen absorber and properly seal the bag closed. This will keep a short term food supply fresh over a given period of time.

Oxygen Absorber Packets and Dessicant Packets

Using oxygen absorbers greatly prolongs the shelf life of stored food. Because it absorbs the oxygen from the container, it inhibits the growth of aerobic pathogens and molds. Oxygen absorbers begin working the moment they are exposed to oxygen. Therefore, it is best to work as efficiently as possible. Oxygen absorbers come in different sizes, so pay attention to the size needed for the container. Typically, 2,000 cc's of oxygen absorbers should be added in one 5 gallon bucket. Oxygen absorbers are not edible, not toxic and does not effect the smell and taste of the product.

Desiccant packets moderate the moisture level when placed in a food container. *They do not absorb the moisture.* Please note that desiccant is not edible. If the packet somehow breaks open and spills onto the stored food, the entire contents of the container must be thrown away. There are certain food items that desiccant should not be added to. Specifically, flour, sugar and salt. These items need a certain amount of moisture to stay activated, and if desiccant is added to it, they will turn into a hard brick.

Bonus

To prevent bug infestations, use diatomaceous earth. Diatomaceous earth are the fossilized remains of diatoms. They are organic and are safe to use on food. Use 1 cup to each 25 pounds of food.

The Sealing Process

- Place the Mylar bag into the 5 gallon container.
- Add your oxygen absorbers or desiccant to the bottom of the bag to ensure all sections of the container are protected. Also, remember you will be adding an absorber at the top of the Mylar bag as well.
- Begin pouring contents into the Mylar bag.
- When you have poured the contents into the Mylar bag and have hit the middle section of the being filled, shake the Mylar bag from time to time to make sure the food gets into the crevices of the bag.
- Continue adding food to the mylar bag until you hit your desired amount. I usually stop 3/4 to the top.
- Next, begin folding the Mylar down in order to get trapped air to escape out the gap.
- Once the air is out, begin sealing the Mylar. A person can use a [heat clamp](#)^[3] or they can seal their Mylar bags with a simple at home iron put on the highest setting. If the home iron method is used, make sure you have a hard surface such as a cutting board or book to iron on and slowly go over the Mylar bag. Note: this method must be done *gently and slowly* or the Mylar will be damaged. Seal straight across the Mylar bag in a straight line. Leave the last 2-3 inches unsealed in order to push the last remaining air out of the bag.
- Once the trapped air has been pushed out, seal the last 2-3 inches.
- Push the sealed Mylar bag into the container. Optional: Add another oxygen absorber on top of the sealed Mylar bag. Place the lid on the container and make sure the lid is on completely.
- Store in a dark storage area, where temperatures, moisture levels and sunlight do not fluctuate.

Where Do I Purchase These Products?

- [The Ready Store](#) ^[4] – For smaller scale purchases
- [Amazon](#) ^[5] - For smaller scale purchases
- [Ropak](#) ^[6] – For large quantity purchases
- [Sorbent Systems](#) ^[7] – For large quantity purchases
- Call around to different restaurants around your area and see if they have any food grade containers with lids that you can have. Typically, restaurants are happy to give these away as they have no need for these containers after they are used. This could save you a lot of money investing in food grade containers.

Food is an investment into your future and your family's livelihood. Therefore, you must do all that you can to protect that investment for the long term. Using the multi-barrier system will ensure that the food is stored in optimal conditions and that the contents inside are protected for the long term.

Article printed from Ready Nutrition: <http://readynutrition.com>

URL to article: http://readynutrition.com/resources/are-you-ready-series-best-practices-for-long-term-food-storage_03042011/

URLs in this post:

[1] Image: <http://readynutrition.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/03/food-storage.jpg>

[2] Source: http://research.amnh.org/anthropology/research/naa/hidden_cave

[3] heat clamp: <http://www.sorbentsystems.com/hotjaw.html>

[4] The Ready Store: <http://www.thereadystore.com/catalogsearch/result/?q=food+buckets>

[5] Amazon: http://www.amazon.com/s/?ie=UTF8&keywords=wondermill&tag=googhydr-20&index=aps&hvadid=2692217161&ref=pd_sl_278c6onjl_b#/ref=nb_sb_noss?url=search-alias%3Daps&field-keywords=mylar+bags&rh=i%3Aaps%2Ck%3Amylar+bags

[6] Ropak: <http://www.linpac.com/Our-Companies/LINPAC-Ropak/>

[7] Sorbent Systems: <http://www.sorbentsystems.com/>

Copyright © 2010 Ready Nutrition. All rights reserved.